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FLOOR DEBATE

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Nebraska in 1987 and came back and drove through our community today, you'd be absolutely shocked at the positive changes and the tremendous growth we have experienced. We are rural. We're a small community in western Nebraska. We ought to be crying the blues like so many else are; instead we have just come off a record breaking decade of progress. Over \$230 million in new economic development and community projects have been completed since 1990. We have tripled our economy. Our taxable retail sales went from \$46 million a year to \$125 million. Our lodging revenues have gone from \$1.1 million to \$4.4 million. Our building permits annually averaged under \$1.5 million into the 1980s. This past year alone our building permits totaled \$20.2 million and \$92 million since 1994. Our county's valuation has grown from \$119 million in 1987 to \$248 million today. Our county valuation went from \$350 million in 1987 to \$616 million. On and on. We built two houses in 1989 in the city of Sidney, one house in 1990. We have built 275 new housing units since 1996. In 1980 we had 4,200 full-time equivalent jobs; 1980. In the year 2001 we now have 6,409 full-time jobs. Go ahead and attempt to shoot bullet holes, spew out innuendos, falsehoods and assumptions as you bash what we commonly refer to as LB 775. But what I'm giving you are the facts. And the greatest fact of them all is the catalyst, for the record-breaking growth in Sidney, Nebraska, experienced in the past decade, was LB 775. No, it wasn't totally responsible for the things that happened, but it was critical for our success. It takes a community attitude, progressive and visionary local business, and government leadership, and the economic development tools that are necessary to get the job done. It is so disappointing to hear many rural organizations jump on the bandwagon and attack this legislation and call for changes. I believe that it is widely misunderstood. I grew up as...as country...as country as it gets; milking cows, scooping manure, and farming with old broken down equipment. I have a great respect and empathy for those that nurture the land and keep alive the agriculture industry that built America. Our rural cousins need to understand how this has helped all of Nebraskans. And if you look at our community statistics you'll see how a success story can happen. There are many other similar success stories across our great state. Mr. Person had the great privilege under Governor Kay Orr, to be a staff member